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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7367th meeting
Thursday, 22 January 2015, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Barros Melet	(Chile)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/956)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/957)

Letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/19)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/956, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to document S/2014/957, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014).

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/19, which contains a letter dated 12 January 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Her Excellency Mrs. Dina Kawar, Permanent Representative of Jordan, in her capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank Council members for giving me this opportunity to brief them on the strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), a task that the Council entrusted me with pursuant to resolution 2147 (2014) and that has taken quite a lot of time over the past months.

I would like to start by expressing my appreciation for the support and assistance provided by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo throughout this important exercise. This was demonstrated by the time accorded to us while our delegation was in Kinshasa by several Congolese ministers, led by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo. There were several meetings, each one lasting several hours, which is a testament to how seriously the Government has taken the review. I would add that I myself had many meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General spoke with President Kabila Kabange over the phone and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Martin Kobler had a long meeting with President Kabila Kabange over the past weekend.

Throughout all those meetings, we had an opportunity to discuss with the Congolese authorities a wide range of issues, including the political situation, security challenges and the upcoming elections. We agreed that over the past years much has been accomplished: the withdrawal of foreign armed forces, the reunification of the country, the establishment of the transitional Government and two national elections. And yet challenges remain. In spite of our military defeat of the Mouvement du 23 mars at the end of 2013, armed groups — both Congolese and foreign — remain, in particular the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces

(ADF). Those armed groups continue to pose a threat to the civilian population and the overall stability and development of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to the Great Lakes region in general.

First, allow me to mention what happened in the past few days with regard to the troubling incidents related to the electoral process in Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu and Lubumbashi. I would like to express our deep concern about the violence that occurred during those events and to deplore the loss of lives, the destruction of property and the acts of looting. The Congolese have the right to express their opinions and demonstrate peacefully. Clearly, the use of violence is unacceptable. Of course, demonstrators and their leaders must be urged to pursue political objectives by non-violent means. However, we are concerned by reports of security forces using force against peaceful, unarmed demonstrators and by reports of arbitrary arrests. It is the responsibility of the Government to maintain a political space and allow for the peaceful expression of opinions. The Government must also ensure that the response to such violent protests is proportionate. Furthermore, the fact that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo ordered Internet sites, text messaging services and radio stations to shut down is a source of concern, as the freedom of expression and communication are essential rights in a democracy and should not be curtailed.

Throughout the discussions I mentioned earlier that we had with the Congolese authorities, we discussed at length the threats facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We discussed the role of MONUSCO and the size of its military and police components. Overall, our assessment was that MONUSCO continues to play an important role in stabilizing the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in supporting the Government in neutralizing armed groups. However, it is true that have heard some criticism about how the Mission is implementing certain aspects of its mandate, specifically the performance of some of its contingents. We take those criticisms seriously, and the report before the Council contains a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring that MONUSCO becomes more effective in implementing its mandate and achieves more tangible results. It should be noted that this also includes a recommendation by the Secretary-General for MONUSCO to intensify dialogue with the Government on a number of key policy issues.

With regard to the military component, at the meeting held yesterday with the troop- and police-contributing countries, I conveyed a very clear message: that the changes necessary to more effectively implement MONUSCO's mandate will not happen merely through a transformation of the MONUSCO force. What is necessary beyond that is a change in the behaviour of the troop-contributing countries deployed on the ground. All of the contingents must be ready and willing to use armed force against those who continue to pose a threat to the civilian population, and this resolve must be translated into action in a more proactive manner. Of course, it is clear that the protection of civilians cannot be limited to military action only.

The Secretary-General has therefore recommended a reduction in MONUSCO military personnel by 2,000 troops and the replacement of the two formed police units that were deployed to South Sudan early last year. His recommendation is based on the relative improvement in the security situation in some parts of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo following the military defeat of the M-23. It is also based on the fact that there has been an improvement in the capacity of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) to address the threat posed by armed groups. It is also based on a number of concrete measures that were taken to make the Force more mobile and more flexible.

It is true that President Kabila and his Government are advocating for deeper personnel cuts. Their view is that maintaining the numbers proposed by the Secretary-General, that is, a cut of 2,000 personnel, would send a negative signal. But, as I explained to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, that recommendation by the Secretary-General is based on an in-depth military capability study and troop-to-task analysis. Considering the numerous political and security challenges that remain, we think that any reduction beyond the recommended figure would have negative implications for the ability of the Force to implement its mandate.

The protection of civilians remains MONUSCO's core mandated task. That requires a strong military component that is able to flexibly and effectively undertake the military aspects of a protection-of-civilians strategy, until the Government forces have the capacity to take over the tasks that have been entrusted to MONUSCO. MONUSCO also has, as the Council is aware, the mandate to neutralize armed groups, which is now more than ever our key priority. To implement that unique mandate, we need adequate capacity

and specialized capabilities, in particular in view of operations against the FDLR and the ADF. I reiterate that military operations against the FDLR must start now. We must also recognize that achieving tangible results in the fight against the FDLR will require both resources and time, considering the dispersed nature of the armed group and its immersion within the local population, so, again, it will take time. We will also have to be careful to avoid any repetition of what happened in 2009, when the FARDC had undertaken military operations against that group, which led to devastating humanitarian consequences.

This, however, does not mean that MONUSCO should stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo indefinitely. We are ready to hold discussions with the Government to develop jointly a plan that would make it possible for the Government to progressively take over the tasks that we are currently performing. MONUSCO's exit strategy must be progressive and tied to specific criteria and targets jointly developed with the Government. Over the past 15 years we have made considerable investments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I think that it is in our collective interest to ensure a gradual withdrawal, without reversing the hard-won gains achieved thus far. Neither the United Nations nor the Government can do this in isolation. The Secretary-General has therefore recommended that MONUSCO and the Government enter into a strategic-level dialogue to develop an exit strategy and road map in the coming months.

We would be happy to work with the Government in order to enable it to implement a strategy that could be accelerated, provided that conditions allow it. Ultimately, the solution to the problem is in the hands of the Government. MONUSCO's drawdown will depend on the Government's commitment and ability to make tangible progress on neutralizing armed groups, in particular the FDLR and the ADF; on building the capacity of the army and the police in a sustainable manner; and its capacity and resolve to hold credible elections that would contribute to consolidating stability in accordance with the Constitution.

Let me conclude by underscoring that we have come a long way and that a great deal has been achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular since the signing almost two years ago in Addis Ababa of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. We are on the right path, but more efforts are needed from all of us to achieve what is in our common interest and our common goal: durable peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. That will require translating the political commitments agreed at Addis Ababa two years ago into concrete action, now more than ever, in particular with regard to the neutralization of armed groups.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Kawar.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan): I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004), concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my statement, I intend to briefly highlight some of the findings and recommendations in the final report of the Group of Experts (see S/2015/19) issued pursuant to resolution 2136 (2014) and touch upon the Committee's consideration of the report during its meeting on 9 January. I also intend to briefly highlight the activities of the Committee since my most recent briefing to the Council, on 20 August 2014, in connection with the midterm report of the Group (see S/2014/428) and set some of out the possible activities that are being considered by the Committee during the course of 2015. As the Group of Experts' final report was made available as a Security Council document on Monday, I intend to highlight just a few of the Group's findings here today.

With regard to the sanctioned entity Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Group considers that a recent military operation significantly weakened but failed to defeat the ADF. The Group is of the view that ADF still has the potential to regroup and rebuild, as it did during similar operations in 2005 and 2010, particularly since its recruitment, support and finance networks have not been significantly affected. The Group also did not find credible evidence that ADF has, or recently has had, links to foreign terrorist groups, including Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab or Boko Haram.

With regard to the sanctioned entity Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), the Group of Experts noted that the armed group's leadership had failed to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the disarmament process. The Group documented the FDLR's involvement in military operations, recruitment and collaboration with other armed groups

and elements of the national army, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC). The Group also established that FDLR leaders and some of their international political supporters had been meeting outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo since at least 2013, and documented FDLR's engagement in the local-level taxation and exploitation of natural resources, sometimes in collaboration with FARDC units.

In the report, the Group also notes that the ADF, FDLR, Nduma Defence for Congo, led by sanctioned individual Sheka Ntabo Ntaberi, and other armed groups continue to recruit, train and use child soldiers in 2014. Armed groups also committed a variety of other abuses, including torture, enslavement and sexual violence. There were mass killings in June in Mutarule, South Kivu, and in October and November 2014 in Beni territory, North Kivu.

The Group also observed that, while there had been progress on traceability and due diligence efforts concerning minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, smuggling continued. In addition, elements of the FARDC and some armed groups remain involved in the minerals trade, potentially introducing conflict minerals into the supply chains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States. According to the Group, there was virtually no progress in addressing the smuggling of gold from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2014. The illegal exploitation of, and trade in, wildlife products, including ivory, remains a serious problem, involving armed groups, elements of the Congolese army, local poachers and armed bands from South Sudan. The FDLR and elements of the army remain involved in the production and trade in charcoal and wood in North Kivu.

Among its 15 recommendations, the Group of Experts proposed that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and several other Governments exchange information to ensure that gold was traded in compliance with international transparency and due diligence standards, namely, by requiring full documentation, including a certificate of origin.

The Group also recommended that the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi investigate and prosecute reported acts of sexual violence and abuse by the Burundian army and/or the Burundian Imbonerakure militia group in the Kiliba area of South Kivu, and that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo investigate and prosecute FARDC officers and soldiers cited in the report who violate the mining code.

In their consideration of the Group's recommendations and the proposed actions by the Committee in connection with the recommendations, the members registered their preliminary agreement with many of the proposed actions, such as letters addressed to a number of States highlighting the Group's recommendation to investigate individuals identified in the report who were involved in the finance, material support and recruitment networks of the ADF. Those draft documents were circulated on Tuesday to the Committee under the standard five-day no objection procedure. With regard to several recommendations where there was no clear agreement from the floor regarding the proposed actions, such as a hold, the Chair intends to conduct further bilaterals with interested delegations to see whether a flexible approach can be found to the manner in which the Committee conveys the Group's recommendations to the relevant Member States.

Since my last briefing to the Council on 20 August 2014, in connection with the Group's midterm report, the Committee held informal consultations on 17 September to hear a briefing by Mr. Abdallah Wafi, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Rule of Law, on the sanctions monitoring mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), in particular weapons marking and tracing, which, in my view, is a key component to the identification of arms embargo violations. At the same meeting, the Committee also heard briefings by Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and by Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, at which time both representatives put forward names for possible sanctions designation. A press release was issued following that meeting.

In terms of the Committee's possible activities this year, it would be the Chair's desire to visit the Great Lakes region, hopefully during the middle of 2015. Prior to that time, I have asked members of the Committee for their views in terms of possible interlocuters who could deepen the Committee's understanding of the implementation of the sanctions regime. In

that connection, the Committee is taking forward my proposal to convene a meeting with States in the region following the publication of the Group of Experts final report as a Council document. To that end, letters to the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and South Africa, in its capacity as Chair of the Southern African Development Community, will be transmitted in connection with the proposed meeting of Friday, 6 March, of the Committee with the invited States. We also value the engagement of Angola in its capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and a member of the Sanctions Committee in the Council.

It would also be my intention, with the agreement of the Committee members, to invite the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to speak with the Committee regarding the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also believe that the Committee would value the insights of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kobler or the relevant MONUSCO representative on the Mission's sanctions monitoring mandate. The Committee could also consider a possible briefing by the Chair of the African group of Member States here in New York to discuss the implementation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime.

The date of 12 March 2015 will mark 11 years since the Security Council established a Sanctions Committee to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo. It is my hope that, during the course of this year, through the Committee's meetings with the regional States and their other interlocuters and through my visit to the Great Lakes region, we may be able to step back and assess the effectiveness and impact of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sanctions regime and consider some very important questions. What, for example, can be done to improve weapon stockpile management and combat networks that supply arms and ammunition to armed groups, in violation of the embargo? How can we stop the recycling of ex-combatants from one armed group to another existing or new armed group? What sort of impact is being felt by the 31 individuals and nine entities whose names are on the sanctions list? What further information do Member States need in order to propose additional names for sanctions, including those who support armed groups through the illicit trade in natural resources, including gold, wildlife and wildlife products, as well as those who continue to recruit children and sexually abuse women?

We must make sure that Member States, particularly those in the region, are cooperating with the Group of Experts and the Committee by answering its letters, facilitating its visits and implementing its recommendations. I trust that this year we will collectively acquire a better appreciation for the commitment given to implementation of the sanctions regime, and of the action can be taken to address any gaps or deficiencies. I am aware of the challenges before us, particularly the differences in views in the region about who bears the greatest responsibility for violating the embargo. Let us engage with their interlocutors by hearing their views and providing assistance as necessary, and, ultimately, let us strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime. The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly the civilians who have borne the brunt of the suffering, deserve no less.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Gata Mavita wa Lufuta (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would first like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over today's Security Council meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to welcome the fact that the representative of Chile is steering the Council for the month of January. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you, on my own and my delegation's behalf, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I also commend your predecessor, the representative of the Republic of Chad, and express our appreciation for the mastery and skill he showed last month during his presidency. And, finally, I would like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom my country is indebted for the outstanding efforts that have been made to effectively restore peace in the Great Lakes region in general and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular.

I will focus on three key topics covered in the reports before the Council: the Secretary-General's report of 30 December 2014 on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) (S/2014/956), his report on MONUSCO submitted pursuant to paragraph

39 of resolution 2147 (2014) (S/2014/957), and the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2015/19).

In resolution 2147 (2014), adopted on 28 March, the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General conduct a thorough strategic review of MONUSCO and the entire United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and submit to it, by 30 December, his recommendations on MONUSCO's future objectives, activities, exit strategy and efficient deployment of resources, keeping in mind that the Mission's effectiveness should continue to increase. My delegation hopes that our exchanges in this and subsequent meetings will enable us to reach a consensus between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council on the progress that has been made towards normalizing the situation in the country, the obstacles that still clutter the road to normalization and thus demand our urgent collective attention and, lastly, on future action by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We can never emphasise strongly enough that the long-suffering peoples of the countries in our region see the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region as eloquent proof of the international community's determination to help find a definitive solution to an instability that has lasted all too long and for which my country in particular has paid a heavy price. That was evident when, as soon as the Framework agreement was signed, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo began working to meet its obligations, which are in fact the same vital and high-priority tasks we have known about for the past 11 years.

In that context, we have accelerated and systematized our security sector reform. Recent concrete actions undertaken to make the defence of our territory more effective and the State's authority more solid include rationalizing the structures and personnel of the army and security and police services; recruiting young Congolese from every province of the country into the defence forces; reopening military academies; and training special forces and support units with the help of bilateral partners with the primary aim of making our rapid reaction force operational. I note that in November 2014, in order to consolidate that State authority, with the help of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team, we began implementing stabilization strategies and action plans in North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu provinces. The Government also welcomes the choice of 13 priority areas for intervention as part of the revised International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. In that regard, MONUSCO's creation of new islands of stability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, located in Katanga, North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu is an encouraging initiative that my Government wholeheartedly supports.

Decentralization, as provided for in the Constitution, has taken another step forward with the adoption of the laws needed to implement it. Reform of the management of public finance, which has been under way for several years and whose positive results are apparent in the overall stability of the economy, is still ongoing and has been usefully supplemented by the entry into force of measures designed to improve the business climate and the national mechanism for certifying mining resources, which in turn will strengthen economic growth. Even better, the Government has just completed a thorough review of its document on strategy and growth for poverty reduction, aimed at making growth more inclusive, partially reducing the delays that have accumulated in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring that the fight against poverty is more credible and effective.

In that regard, we see as particularly crucial elements the economic recovery and rehabilitation and social integration components of our stabilization and reconstruction programmes, particularly the stabilization and reconstruction plan for areas emerging from armed conflict and the programme developed by the United Nations country team, designed to consolidate and develop the northern and western regions that, though they have not seen conflict, are still having to deal with the consequences of the instability in the north and east. We are therefore counting on the active involvement of the United Nations and the international community in those programmes' funding and implementation.

In the wake of the reform of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and the enactment of various relevant laws, my country is resolutely committed to the process leading to the holding of democratic elections for the third time. The Government is determined to meet the challenge of organizing them peacefully and in a way that ensures that they will be free and democratic. The unfortunate events that took place in Kinshasha over the past few days, to which Under-Secretary-General Ladsous

referred earlier and which should be viewed as part of the learning experience on the road to democracy, will not hinder the organization of those elections, the calendar of which is to be published by CENI, which is constitutionally mandated to manage them.

With regard to these events, I note that during the 2011 elections, various partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the opposition made suggestyions that CENI deemed useful to include in the new electoral law enacted by Parliament. Those suggestions included promoting gender awareness and counting the votes of Congolese abroad. The events were the result of the manipulation of the country's population by an opposition party.

When we consider the security situation that prevailed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo just two years ago, this analysis gives us grounds for great satisfaction. Major progress has been made in reducing threats to the security of the population and in improving the conditions under which the Government can assume responsibility for that security. We legitimately believe that we are emerging from the phase of restoring and keeping the peace. From that point of view, we should look at future objectives and the MONUSCO withdrawal strategy.

After 15 years of United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we should give credit to the partnership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations, the international community and regional organizations for, among other things, the withdrawal of foreign armed forces, the reunification of the country, the establishment of the transitional Government, and the holding of two national elections.

Fifteen years is a significant amount of time. We believe that we are jointly responsible for assessing the United Nations actions in our country to support the Government in order to ensure that they remain relevant to the goals we have set and the emerging challenges we face. We agree with the Secretary-General that frank discussion between the United Nations and the Government of my country is necessary to reach a compromise without endangering the progress achieved on the ground. My Government would like the Security Council to engage in such a discussion instead of making a unilateral decision.

The ultimatum issued to the Forces démocratique de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) rebel group to lay down its weapons and demobilize for voluntary repatriation ended on 2 January. The forced disarmament of that Rwandan rebellion by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo, in cooperation with the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade, is now a military issue. The impatience seen among a number of partners is shared by the Congolese people and their leaders. The mere 25 per cent of FDLR combattants who laid down their arms to enter transit centres is not at all satisfactory to my Government. Forced disarmament remains the only option at present. It will take place as soon as possible and in the most appropriate fashion, bearing in mind all the parameters that are open to our defence and security forces.

We recall that FDLR is not an army in the traditional sense. These are fighters without distinctive markings who hide behind a human shield made up of our compatriots and Rwandan civilian refugees. It is therefore up to the army to adapt its entire strategy to that reality on the ground. At this time, the national imperative for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to put an end to the presence in the country of FDLR combattants, who are a threat to peace not only in their country of origin, but also and above all in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where they have committed many criminal acts against our country and its population for over two decades.

It is generally agreed today that assistance to a country in a post-conflict situation like my own must be based on the priorities of that country and its real needs in order to make it possible for the population to legitimately benefit from the dividends of peace. The Democratic Republic of the Congo recognizes that it needs lasting peace in order to respond to the challenges of building a well-functioning, strong and prosperous State that cares for the rights of its citizens and is able provide for their needs. We therefore expect a great deal from the United Nations, which undeniably has the ability to assist in strengthening public institutions. All that we ask is that we be treated as responsible adults able to assume the prerogatives of our recovered sovereignty.

The keywords for the future of our cooperation are "dialogue" and "partnership" based on the principle of ownership by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the secondary role of international cooperation. We recognize that to be effective, ownership requires strengthened national capacity.

To conclude, my delegation takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and the representative of Jordan for their briefings. I would also like to thank the members of the Security Council for all of their tireless and very welcome initiatives to re-establish peace in my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite the members of the Council to proceed to consultations on this same topic.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.